

University of the West of Scotland

Module Descriptor

Session: 2023/24

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Status: Published

Title of Module: MSc Masters Project

Code: COMP11117	SCQF Level: 11 (Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework)	Credit Points: 60	ECTS: 30 (European Credit Transfer Scheme)
School:	School of Computing, Engineering and Physical Sciences		
Module Co-ordinator:	Graeme A. McRobbie		

Summary of Module

The Masters project is designed to enable students to demonstrate their ability to present sustained rational arguments and independent conclusions based on a body of personal research. The content and output of the project must relate to the student's Programme of Study. Projects exploring a solution to a 'live' business opportunity/problem are welcomed. However, all projects must be supported by a clear academic underpinning which can be demonstrated in the literature review.

In the case of software specifications or designs, the arguments used are likely to relate to the critical evaluation of the requirements and in the assessment of alternative tools, methods and solutions that could be employed, and the conclusions will concern the justification for the particular choices made. Alternatively, the project may be primarily concerned with the evaluation of some existing tool or technique or software system, and the arguments shall be concerned with the development and application of criteria in performing such an assessment. Additionally, projects may require the gathering of empirical evidence by directly testing such tools or systems, and/or by seeking information from those who use (or would use in the case of a system to be developed) the system about aspects of its use. In such cases the student will need to present arguments to justify the approach taken in obtaining such evidence and to present it in such a way as to support the conclusions that can be drawn (or not drawn) from it.

- Undertaking this module will provide the student with the opportunity to develop the following UWS graduate attributes: Universal: critical thinker, analytical, inquiring, ethically minded, research-minded; Work-ready: knowledgeable, problem-solver, effective communicator, motivated, potential leader, enterprising; Successful: Autonomous, innovative, creative resilient, driven, transformational.

Module Delivery Method

Face-To-Face	Blended	Fully Online	HybridC	HybridO	Work-based Learning
				✓	

Face-To-Face

Term used to describe the traditional classroom environment where the students and the lecturer meet synchronously in the same room for the whole provision.

Blended

A mode of delivery of a module or a programme that involves online and face-to-face delivery of learning, teaching and assessment activities, student support and feedback. A programme may be considered "blended" if it includes a combination of face-to-face, online and blended modules. If an online programme has any compulsory face-to-face and campus elements it must be described as blended with clearly articulated delivery information to manage student expectations

Fully Online

Instruction that is solely delivered by web-based or internet-based technologies. This term is used to describe the previously used terms distance learning and e learning.

HybridC

Online with mandatory face-to-face learning on Campus

HybridO

Online with optional face-to-face learning on Campus

Work-based Learning

Learning activities where the main location for the learning experience is in the workplace.

Campus(es) for Module Delivery

The module will **normally** be offered on the following campuses / or by Distance/Online Learning: (Provided viable student numbers permit)

Paisley:	Ayr:	Dumfries:	Lanarkshire:	London:	Distance/Online Learning:	Other:
✓				✓		

Term(s) for Module Delivery

(Provided viable student numbers permit).

Term 1	✓	Term 2	✓	Term 3	✓
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Learning Outcomes: (maximum of 5 statements)

On successful completion of this module the student will be able to:

L1. produce a MSc level project specification (relevant to the domain of the student's specific degree programme)

L2. demonstrate a systematic and critical understanding of the approaches available to address problems and create knowledge and useful artifacts (relevant to the domain of the student's specific degree programme), and of the underlying theoretical assumptions and concepts of such approaches

L3. demonstrate an ability to select and apply in a critical and reflective fashion, appropriate research and/or development techniques in producing a solution or solutions to a practical problem (in an area relevant to the student's specific degree programme)

L4. critically and reflectively plan and execute a project to develop an artifact that is fit for purpose in addressing a stated problem (relevant to the domain of the student's specific degree programme)

L5. write a detailed, well argued and coherent report of a sustained independent work of high quality that fulfils an agreed specification

Employability Skills and Personal Development Planning (PDP) Skills

SCQF Headings	During completion of this module, there will be an opportunity to achieve core skills in:
Knowledge and Understanding (K and U)	SCQF Level 11. Research Specification, Literature reviews, Research Methodologies, Data Collection and Analysis, Reporting, in-depth knowledge of their chosen research area
Practice: Applied Knowledge and Understanding	SCQF Level 11. Conducting a literature search, identifying appropriate research methodologies and techniques, gathering and making sense of data; writing a research report, developing a technical artifact where relevant
Generic Cognitive skills	SCQF Level 11. Research, Analysis, Reporting, Critical Evaluation and Reflection
Communication, ICT and Numeracy Skills	SCQF Level 11. Use of appropriate ICT in achieving the research objectives e.g. in developing artefacts or data collection/analysis; presenting the results of the project in an

	appropriate, academic format
Autonomy, Accountability and Working with others	SCQF Level 11. Taking on responsibility for the selection of the research topic and ownership of the research process including integrity in the use of sources. Understanding the application of ethical principles in research; managing and respecting potential research collaborators, 'users', 'clients', and any others who may contribute to the student's project. Able to conduct and report a piece of research following given ethical guidelines

Pre-requisites:	Before undertaking this module the student should have undertaken the following:	
	Module Code:	Module Title:
	Other:	
Co-requisites	Module Code:	Module Title:

* Indicates that module descriptor is not published.

Learning and Teaching	
Learning Activities During completion of this module, the learning activities undertaken to achieve the module learning outcomes are stated below:	Student Learning Hours (Normally totalling 200 hours): (Note: Learning hours include both contact hours and hours spent on other learning activities)
Lecture/Core Content Delivery	2
Tutorial/Synchronous Support Activity	10
Independent Study	588
	600 Hours Total

**Indicative Resources: (eg. Core text, journals, internet access)
The following materials form essential underpinning for the module content and ultimately for the learning outcomes: Oates, B. (2012) Researching Information Systems and Computing, Sage*
Cornford, T. and Smithson, S. (2006) Project Research in Information Systems: A Student's Guide. (2nd edition), Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke.*
Dawson, C., 2009 (2nd edition), Projects in Computing and Information Systems: A Student Guide, Addison-Wesley*
Howard, K., Sharp J.A., Peters J. (2002), The Management of a Student Research Project, The Open University Press*
Lazar, J., Feng, J.H., Hochheiser, H. (2009), Research Methods in Human Computer Interaction, Wiley and Sons*
Pears, R., Shields G. (2016), Cite them right: the essential referencing guide, 9th ed, Palgrave MacMillan*
Robson, C. (2003), How to do a Research Project, Blackwell*
Saunders, M.N.K., Thornhill, A., Lewis, P. and McMillan, K. (2008) Research Methods for Business Students: AND "How to Write Dissertations and Project Reports, Prentice-Hall*
Weaver, P. (2003), Success in Your Project: A Guide to Student System Development Projects, Prentice-Hall.*

Wisker, G. (2008) The Postgraduate Research Handbook (2nd edition), Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke.*

(**N.B. Although reading lists should include current publications, students are advised (particularly for material marked with an asterisk*) to wait until the start of session for confirmation of the most up-to-date material)

Engagement Requirements

In line with the Academic Engagement Procedure, Students are defined as academically engaged if they are regularly engaged with timetabled teaching sessions, course-related learning resources including those in the Library and on the relevant learning platform, and complete assessments and submit these on time. Please refer to the Academic Engagement Procedure at the following link: [Academic engagement procedure](#)

Supplemental Information

Programme Board	Computing
Assessment Results (Pass/Fail)	No
Subject Panel	Business and Applied Computing
Moderator	tbc
External Examiner	tbc
Accreditation Details	pending
Changes/Version Number	1

Assessment: (also refer to Assessment Outcomes Grids below)

The module offers 2 choices of written assessment output. Students can either submit (a) a 'traditional' written report (maximum 18000 words) or (b) an output in the form of a paper suitable for a peer reviewed journal publication (no submission or acceptance by the selected journal is necessary for the MSc Project).

Choice of the latter output should be agreed with the supervisor (who will advise on a suitable journal) and the module co-ordinator. Guidelines as to the type of project appropriate for the journal paper output will be provided by individual supervisors.

Regardless of chosen final output the module requires:

Production and approval of a formal project specification which outlines the research topic, initial sources of information, suggests a suitable research methodology and an appropriate marking scheme. 0% (formative assessment only)

Production of an interim report approximately half way through the body of work to allow formal feedback from supervisor and moderator (maximum of 8000 words). 0% (formative but mandatory assessment only)

A final written report/paper detailing the work of the Masters Project (maximum 18000 words or limit set by the chosen journal) worth 60% of the module mark

Project duration: full-time = 15 weeks; part-time = 30 weeks

The project is marked by both supervisor and moderator independently and a mark agreed. If a mark cannot be agreed, then a third marker is sought. A discussion will then take place between the 3 markers and an agreement of a mark between at least two of the markers will be taken as the final mark.

A viva which is to take place after submission of the final report/paper ('defence' of the work submitted) worth 20% of the module mark

A project process mark worth 20% of the module mark (awarded by the supervisor).

All of the elements are compulsory. A minimum overall mark of 50% is required to achieve a pass in this module.

(N.B. (i) **Assessment Outcomes Grids** for the module (one for each component) can be found below which clearly demonstrate how the learning outcomes of the module will be assessed.
(ii) An **indicative schedule** listing approximate times within the academic calendar when assessment is likely to feature will be provided within the Student Handbook.)

Assessment Outcome Grids (Footnote A.)

Component 1							
Assessment Type (Footnote B.)	Learning Outcome (1)	Learning Outcome (2)	Learning Outcome (3)	Learning Outcome (4)	Learning Outcome (5)	Weighting (% of Assessment Element)	Timetabled Contact Hours
Dissertation/ Project report/ Thesis	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	60	0

Component 2							
Assessment Type (Footnote B.)	Learning Outcome (1)	Learning Outcome (2)	Learning Outcome (3)	Learning Outcome (4)	Learning Outcome (5)	Weighting (% of Assessment Element)	Timetabled Contact Hours
Clinical/ Fieldwork/ Practical skills assessment/ Debate/ Interview/ Viva voce/ Oral	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	20	1

Component 3							
Assessment Type (Footnote B.)	Learning Outcome (1)	Learning Outcome (2)	Learning Outcome (3)	Learning Outcome (4)	Learning Outcome (5)	Weighting (% of Assessment Element)	Timetabled Contact Hours
Performance/ Studio work/ Placement/ WBL/ WRL assessment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	20	0
Combined Total For All Components						100%	1 hours

Footnotes

- A. Referred to within Assessment Section above
B. Identified in the Learning Outcome Section above

Note(s):

1. More than one assessment method can be used to assess individual learning outcomes.
2. Schools are responsible for determining student contact hours. Please refer to University Policy on contact hours (extract contained within section 10 of the Module Descriptor guidance note).
This will normally be variable across Schools, dependent on Programmes &/or Professional requirements.

Equality and Diversity

[UWS Equality and Diversity Policy](#)

(N.B. Every effort will be made by the University to accommodate any equality and diversity issues brought to

the attention of the School)